

From: Barbara Dwyer [montereydivingwoman@earthlink.net]
Sent: Thursday, February 01, 2007 3:59 AM
To: fgc@fgc.ca.gov; MLPAComments@resources.ca.gov
Cc: Jesus Ruiz; Marc Shargel; Chuck Tribolet
Subject: [MLPA Comments] Another diver supports Option 3,MPA protections---photos and letter

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January 31, 2007

To the DFG Commission:

As an active Bay Area diver/divemaster, sailor, and coastal hiker, I urge the DFG Commission to support the MLPA protections that the dive community advocates. Voting to allow fishing from shore, massive kelp harvesting, and competitive fishing would jeopardize the creatures, ecosystem, and people for which your mission statement purports to protect. I urge you to:

- **Support Option 3: Ban fishing from Breakwater and Ricketts on weekends** (6pm Fridays to 6pm Sundays) for safety and environmental reasons. This compromise exempts handicapped fishers, protects divers, and may allow rockfish a chance to repopulate.

Allowing weekend fishing from Breakwater when some 400-500 people are diving there sets the stage for an accident. Recent local documentation notes just over every two weeks, a diver is snagged by a fishhook. How can the Commission justify exposing divers to unnecessary injury? How can we ethically tell students that the risk is negligible? I cannot, because I've been snagged, as have many of my friends.

Consider this: A hook to the facial area would cause a diver to struggle, the fisherman to start reeling, and the diver to lose his mask. The fishhook could penetrate the eye (photo from recent medical literature). Or a panicked diver could drown. *The Commission should consider the potential liability to the City of Monterey, especially since this well-recognized problem is now in the public domain.*



Source: Awan A, Scott JA: Corneal injury from a fishing line: a new mechanism. *Eye* (2006) 20, 1084-1086.

As environmentalists, divers frequently remove lead sinkers from Breakwater. Many of us carry paramedic scissors to snip monofilament from the jetty and its inhabitants. Never have I needed to use a knife underwater, but I routinely use my shears.

Recently I spent a 90-minute dive at Breakwater freeing a monofilament-entangled, struggling crab. Working alone, this was a difficult and depressing ordeal, relieved only because the creature scuttled off. For shame!

- **Limit kelp clear cutting.** Proposed regulations would allow 56 tons of kelp per month per harvester, with no limits on the number of harvesters. Even if just the four locally active harvesters cut the allowed amount, the situation would be completely unsustainable.

Kelp provides habitat for marine life, from the smallest invertebrate to bull sea lions. The complex canopies serve as nurseries for juvenile rockfish, providing refuge during vulnerable stages of the life cycle. Divers, shoreline businesses, and Monterey/Pacific Grove residents all are on record for preserving the kelp canopy. We urge DFG to support us.



Sunlight through the kelp canopy, Carmel CA

- **Ban competitive fishing competitions in MPAs.** Ethical land-based hunters shun such unsportsmanlike behavior. We should likewise prohibit it in our marine sanctuaries.

Competitive fishing inappropriately rewards participants for taking the most robust fish. This reduces genetically sound reproductive stock, narrows biodiversity, and lessens non-consumptive divers' chance to see unusual fish. Permitting a few dozen competitive fishing enthusiasts to degrade the experience of thousands is neither fair policy nor sound economics.

Personal Observations

Over the last fifteen years I've observed a steady decline of marine species at the unprotected areas. *By contrast, protected areas such as Point Lobos or Hopkins Reef* shelter thriving and diverse populations of lingcod, bluefish, cabezon, and other species that once were plentiful in all areas of the bay. The photos below were taken in Pt. Lobos State Park, which has long been a no-take zone.



Author swims with rockfish school, Pt. Lobos, CA

Most weekends I travel from the San Francisco area just to dive. I bring friends, students, and visitors. My collection of dive gear, worth about \$10,000 to \$13,000, was purchased at local dive shops. I spend \$300 or more per weekend staying in Monterey's hotels, eating at its restaurants, purchasing breathing

gas, and otherwise supporting its economy. Our students do the same, because we encourage them to certify locally rather than in the warmer, less challenging tropical waters. Multiply our revenues times several hundred divers per weekend, then estimate the economic loss if Monterey's coast becomes barren and dead.

Sincerely,



Barbara J. Dwyer (*and dive buddy at elbow*)

PADI (Professional Association of Dive Instructors), #15076

Aqua Tutus Dive Club, Castro Valley CA

UHMS (Undersea Hyperbaric Medical Society)

NACD (National Association of Cave Divers)

NSS-CDS (Cave Diving Section, National Speleological Society)

IANTD (International Association of Nitrox and Technical Divers), Technical Cave; Full Trimix